



August 7, 2006

Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Program Redesign

The Department of Health and Family Services has decided to redesign how out-of-home care and adoption services are provided. This decision will affect the two existing contracts now in place for the provision of these services with First Choice for Children (FCFC), which currently has the out of home care contract for foster parents, and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), which has the adoption contract.

Requests for proposals will be issued for the following program services:

Recruitment of foster and adoptive families

Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Case Management, which includes:

- Licensing/relicensing of foster parents. Streamlined adoption home study process
- Placement matching, selection, and authorization
- Support of foster and pre-adoptive parents
- Adoption case management
- Quality Assurance

Permanency consulting services

Background

Children in Out-of-Home Care

For the past three years, the number of children in out-of-home care (OHC) remained around 3,000. OHC includes placement:

- With relatives on a court order in unlicensed home
- With relatives in a licensed foster home
- In a non-relative foster home
- In a pre-adoptive home
- In “higher level of care,” including group homes, treatment foster homes, or residential care center.

Racial breakdown of children in out-of-home care

American Indian/Alaskan	1.3%
Asian	0.6%
Black/African American	76.0%
Caucasian	20.5%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Not Specified	1.6%
Hispanic – see note below **	0.1%

* The approximate percentages provided are based on children in an out-of-home care placement on December 31, 2005.

** The 2000 US Census designations used by BMCW did not allow accurate tracking of children identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Chicano. Approximately 300 children who may be identified as Hispanic are embedded in the race designations above.

Geographical Location of Birth Parent upon Removal

Below are the top five zip codes from which children were most frequently removed from their parental homes.

Zip Code	Children Removed
53206	112
53212	73
53215	70
53210	60
53218	52

As of June 30, 2006, the break-down of children entering out-of-home care by age was:
Birth to 4 = 47% 5-11 = 28% 12-14 = 19% 15+ = %

Recruitment

- The emphasis is on identifying quality homes.
- Foster parents must be culturally competent and able to accommodate children from families with a diversity of lifestyles.
- Spanish-speaking families are needed.
- Needs change according to the children brought into care, so recruitment must be flexible enough to change with the needs identified.
- Our greatest need is for more homes for children with medical and behavioral issues, homes for larger siblings groups, and more quality care for adolescents.
- A pool of homes is needed so that there is a choice of which home is best matched to the child's needs as opposed to "finding a bed."
- Since foster families often become adoptive resources, joint recruitment efforts should be undertaken.

Out-of-Home Care and Adoption Case Management

Licensing and relicensing of foster parents

- Foster parent licenses are valid for two years. Existing foster parents must be re-licensed every two years with half the foster parents on a schedule of the odd numbered years and the other half on the schedule for re-licensure on the even numbered years. New foster home licensing studies are conducted each month on 20 – 40 applicants.
- In the new design, when foster parents become licensed, their home study will be viewed as a joint investigation designed to assess the home for both foster and adoptive care.

Placement matching, selection, and authorization

- The placement authorization function includes keeping a centralized, current, and accurate listing of all available and full placements by type (foster home, group homes, and treatment home) and providing that information to BMCW staff when they call to request out-of-home care for a child.
- Between 80 and 120 new children are placed in out-of-home care each month.
- There are currently about 800 active foster homes.
- Treatment foster homes, group homes, and residential care facilities are contracted services.

Support to foster parents

- There are approximately about 800 active licensed foster homes. Foster parents must be visited by licensing staff at least once every month if they are licensed for one year or less and every other months if they are licensed for more than one year.
- Retention must be part of the support effort. We want foster parents to have a positive experience, to feel they are making a difference in the life of a child, and to remain active.
- Help locating medical/mental health services and other resources to meet the child's needs.
- Referral to training and other assistance with behavioral issues.

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Adoption Case Management

- Adoption home studies completed with foster care licensing as a joint study.
- Adoption worker
- Works with child and adoptive family
- Prepares child for adoption
- Authorizes adoption assistance/medical assistance and services for other post-adoptive services
- Court process

Permanency consulting services

- Expedites achievement of permanency.
 - Permanency is achieved when a child is living in a home that the child, parents/caregivers, and others believe will endure lifelong.
- Examine all options for providing children with a permanent home that meets the child's physical and emotional needs and determine which option is in the best interest of the child.
 - Remain home with services in place
 - Reunification after removal from home
 - TPR/Adoption
 - Legal Guardianship
 - Long-term foster care/sustaining care
- Works as a member of the ongoing case management team.
- Ensures cases move forward according to American Safe Families Act (ASFA) guidelines.
- There were 373 adoptions in 2005.